



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>

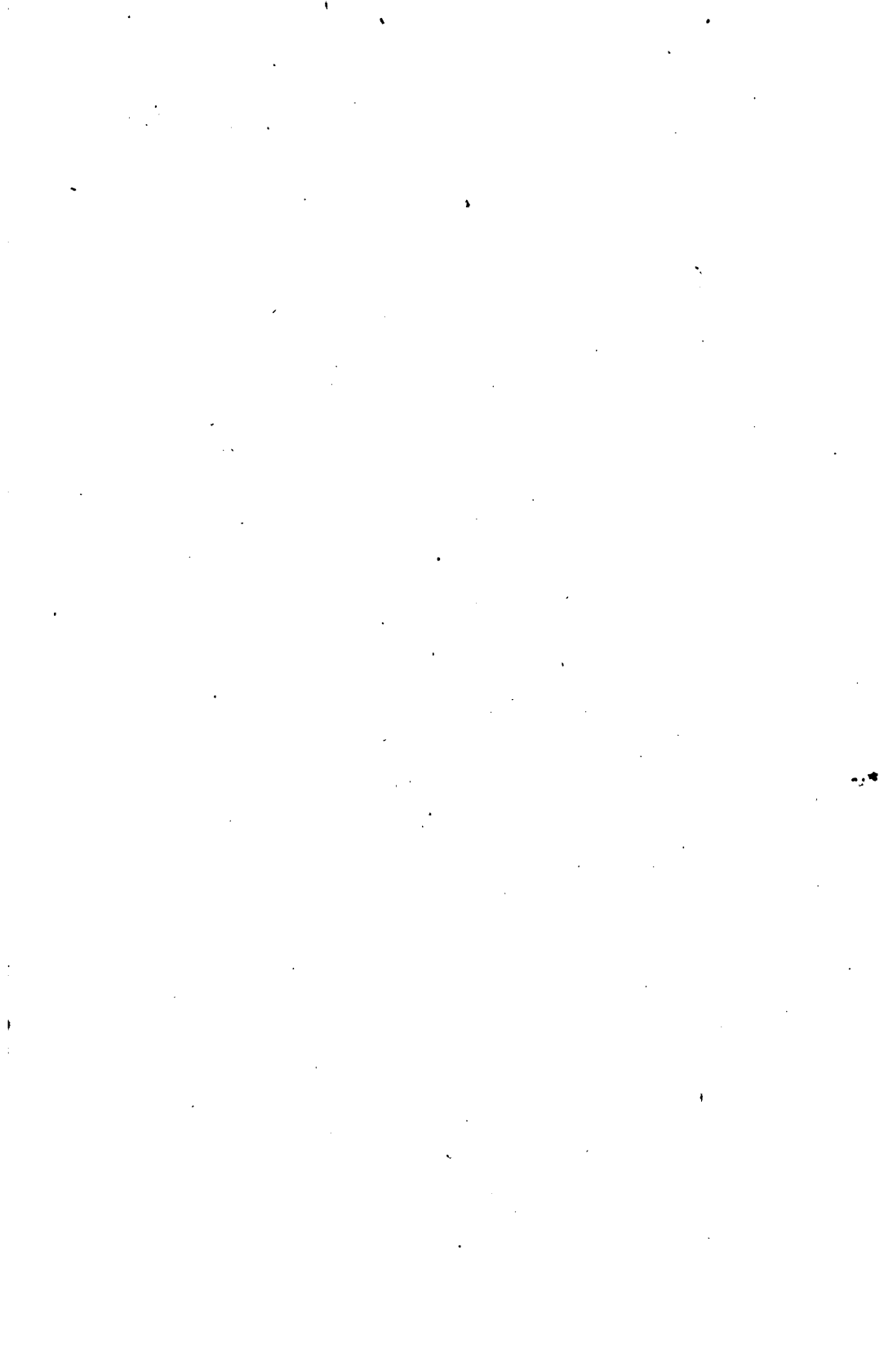
AE 5 14979.5

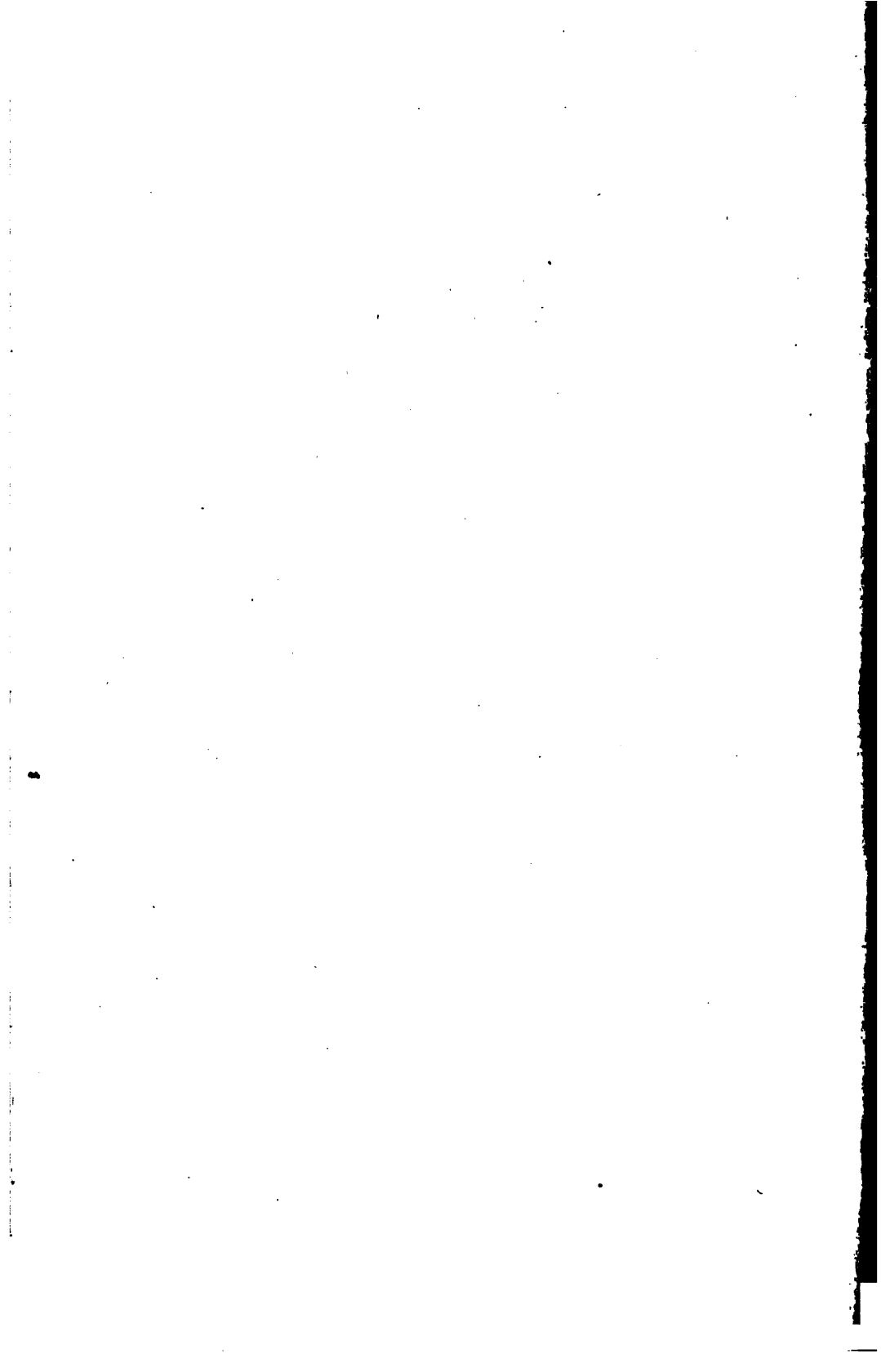
HARVARD COLLEGE
LIBRARY



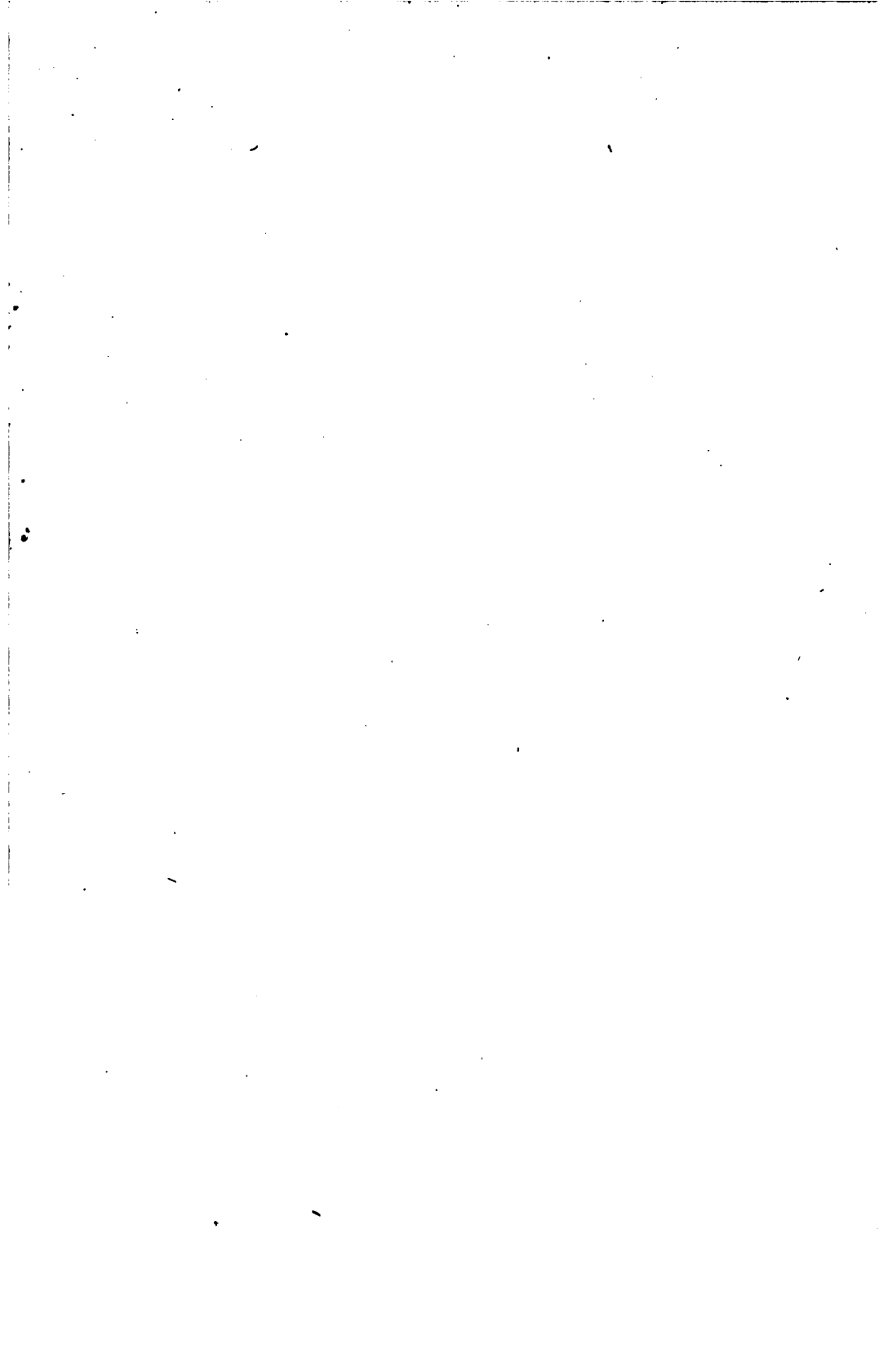
THE BEQUEST OF
EVERT JANSEN WENDELL
(CLASS OF 1882)
OF NEW YORK

1918





RALPH I. INGERSOLL.



0

A

BRIEF SKETCH

OF THE

LIFE AND CHARACTER

OF THE LATE

RALPH I. INGERSOLL.

By HENRY BRONSON, M. D.

NEW HAVEN:
FROM PRESS OF HOGGSON & ROBINSON.
1873.

W 14979.5

HARVARD COLLEGE LIBRARY
FROM
THE BEQUEST OF
EVERT JANSEN WENDALL
1918

RALPH I. INGERSOLL.*

RALPH ISAACS INGERSOLL, the son of Jonathan and Grace (Isaacs) Ingersoll, was born in New Haven, February, 8th, 1789, in the house now known as the Park House, on Chapel Street, midway between Temple and Gregson streets. His father, a gentleman of great moral worth, and "among the foremost in his profession," was a member of the court of assistants, afterward state attorney, in 1793 elected a representative in Congress (he declined to serve,) eight years a judge of the superior court, and lieutenant-governor from 1816 to the time of his death, January 12th, 1823, at the age of seventy-five. The grandfather was the Rev. Jonathan Ingersoll, who went from Milford to Ridgefield, where he was settled as a Congregational minister, and there died in 1778, in the fortieth year of his ministry.† Jared Ingersoll, of New Haven, the famous stamp-master, one of the ablest lawyers of his time,‡ and the ancestor of those of the name in Philadelphia, was his grand-uncle. A junior brother, also distinguished, was the late Judge Charles A. Ingersoll. His fourth son, his successor in practice, is now the Governor of Connecticut. Another son was a representative in Congress from this (New Haven) district in 1851-55.

After his graduation at Yale College in 1808, young Ingersoll read law two years with Seth P. Staples, and then opened an office in New Haven. The period was an interesting one. Pierpont Edwards, able and eloquent, had recently been transferred

* This sketch, much abbreviated, was printed in the last volume of the "Connecticut Reports."

† See Goodrich's "Recollections of a Life Time," Chapter VIII.

‡ See Dwight's Statistical Account of New Haven, p. 73.

to the bench of the District Court of the United States, leaving at the bar, as its most prominent members, David Daggett, Nathan Smith and S. P. Staples, each pre-eminent in his way. The last will be remembered as the founder of the Law school of New Haven. Of the two others, the first had the advantage in early education, scientific training and compact powerful argument. The last was distinguished for native shrewdness, practical knowledge of character in every phase and station of life, and marvelous, matchless skill in finding his way to the minds and hearts of juries. They long lived side by side, and were on excellent terms. Perhaps equal in natural gifts, and equally adroit in combat, they were usually pitted against each other. Gentlemen of the old school, their exalted reputations, dignified, portly forms and courtly manners—their white-top-boots, ruffled shirts and powdered hair—made them note-worthy personages in every circle. Smith soon became interested in the young advocate, gave him his hand, and encouraged him as he had opportunity. In return, the latter assisted his friend in the preparation of his cases, and ever after spoke of him in terms of admiration. He considered him a thorough and very able lawyer, of infinite tact and skill in the management of his cases. Said he, a few months before his death: “He was a wonderful man, and, at the bar, feared nobody.”

It is the best evidence of Mr. Ingersoll's energy and talent that he was able, in the presence and by the side of these champions of the law, first to stand erect, then to attain eminence. Doubtless the models he had before him awakened ambition, and thus contributed to his success. Four years later than himself, there came to the New Haven county bar two other young men, natives of the same town, who were his companions and friends, allies or antagonists, for nearly fifty years.* While memory lives,

* It is not a part of the present plan to speak of those who came later upon the stage, or were not so intimately or so long associated with Mr. Ingersoll.

Dennis Kimberly and Roger S. Baldwin will not be forgotten. After their accession, there were in New Haven six lawyers and advocates, all in practice (or temporarily absent*) in 1814, and all eminent or soon to become so. Three were veterans of the previous century, and three were beginners, toiling and waiting. Staples removed to New York, and died in 1861, aged eighty-five. Daggett became a judge of the superior court in 1826, and died in 1851, at the age of eighty-six. Smith was elected a senator of the United States, and in 1835 died suddenly in Washington, aged sixty-five. When the last of these was gone, the three others, now in the prime of manhood, stepped to the front, and for almost thirty years were leading members of the New Haven county bar. They were a remarkable group, each conspicuous for talent, integrity and manly qualities. General Kimberly, a noble man, with many precious gifts, was the first to be taken away. He died December 14th, 1862, at the age of seventy-two. Governor Baldwin followed February 19th, 1863, aged seventy. His mind was a storehouse of foundation-principles of which he made the most effective use. If he had a superior for legal acumen, keen and refined analysis, and severe, perspicuous and convincing logic, his name is forgotten. In this manner the group, first of six then of three, was reduced to one. The survivor, a patriarch in the profession, lingered a few years near the shore, and then joined his old-time friends across the flood!

As the associate, often as the opponent of these strong men, Mr. Ingersoll won his reputation. Merit, assiduity and self-reliance carried him victoriously over every obstacle. Like others who achieve success, he did not rely on patrimony (for he had none), or social position, or powerful friends, or any external helps, but on himself. Business, honor, the friendship of the wise and good, and all the rewards which the right mind seeks flowed

* Daggett was a senator in Congress from 1813 to 1819.

in upon him because he deserved them. Very justly, the world is most ready to help those who are struggling to help themselves.

During the war of 1812 and immediately afterward, military honors were much sought by aspiring young men. In 1813 Mr. Ingersoll had become second-lieutenant of the horse guards, and the next year, brigade-major and inspector, second brigade, under General Howe. While holding the last office, an incident occurred which sets forth the manner in which, thus early, he discharged his duties. At a parade in Guilford, while subjecting the implements of war to a severer test than was customary, he broke many swords and bayonets. Great indignation followed, and personal violence was threatened. To satisfy the dissatisfied, chief among whom was one Captain Stone, of Guilford, who brought the charges, a court-martial was ordered, and he was tried publicly, in the old court-house on the green, for "unofficer-like conduct and neglect of duty." It was a rough ordeal for one so young and sensitive; but undismayed he undertook his own vindication, and made a ringing, most effective defence. He was a modest, handsome youth, of a delicate somewhat fragile form, whose whole appearance was prepossessing. When sufficient interest had been awakened, he bared his puny arm to show with how little force the mischief had been done, and (inferentially) how unfit for service were the shattered weapons. The effect was electric. The accused was "fully and honorably acquitted," the general orders announcing the fact bearing date June 24, 1815. The trial made the eloquent inspector famous.

While still young, Mr. Ingersoll, coming from the old federal stock, (of which no one has need to be ashamed,) took an interest in politics. His father was one of the most eminent and honored of the dominant party, and an influential Episcopalian. For the purpose of conciliating the dissenters, (those dissenting from the "standing order" of Congregationalism,) he was made lieutenant-governor in 1816, and thus became the first elective state officer

which the "proscribed" sects had furnished. The next year (1817) he was again nominated, and also placed upon the liberal or "toleration" ticket, headed by Oliver Wolcott, an old but disaffected federalist, who was supposed to favor reform. Unexpectedly, Governor Smith was defeated, and Wolcott and his associate, and a majority of the lower house on the same side, were elected. The contest was bitter, and to a large extent personal. By this maneuver, the federal phalanx was broken.* In the midst of the fray, on the eve of the election, young Ingersoll appeared—appeared as the opponent of proscription, and the advocate of equality and popular rights. Mr. Converse, of the *New Haven Journal*, spoke of him as "a young man of handsome talents," who injured himself by supporting a cause his judgment did not approve. A year later, he was nominated by the reform party for Congress, doubtless without expecting his election.

The revolution, begun in 1817, was completed in 1818, and a new constitution, taking the place of King Charles' charter, framed and adopted. In April, 1819, on the third ballot, by a majority of twelve votes, Mr. Ingersoll, at the age of thirty, was elected first representative from New Haven, previously a strong federal town. The other nominee on the same side, Dr. Levi Ives, was defeated by federal strategy and seven votes. The session which followed, on account of the changed constitution and the legislation it made necessary, was an important one. In the

* The old federal party relied for its support mainly on the Congregationalists; the democratic party, on the minor sects or dissenters. The minor sects (of which the Episcopalians ranked first in numbers and respectability, the Baptists, probably, second, and the Methodists third, the Universalists and their like being "heathen,") may have equaled half the population of the State. But certain influential federalists, the Ingersolls, Nathan Smith, Asa Chapman and others, were zealous churchmen, and sympathized of course with the lesser denominations. When these, joined by a few liberal ("recreant") Congregationalists, became the advocates of religious toleration, a division in the federal ranks was effected. The seceders or deserters, so termed, were called *tolerationists*. In their united attempt at reform, they were reinforced by the old fashioned republicans or democrats, and thus by a general coalition obtained a majority of votes. By estimation, the lower house in May, 1821, three years after the revolution, was composed of seventy federalists, ninety old school republicans and forty tolerationists.

house were present several prominent men of both parties, but it was not strong in intellect, particularly on the side of the reformers. Our friend was chosen second clerk, (the clerks were then members,) assumed the second place on the judiciary committee, and immediately took a high position among the leaders in debate. He appears to have been an earnest, industrious and useful member, speaking frequently, but not at much length. He was doubtless at times vehement, and the federal papers called him young Hotspur; but if the evidence is to be trusted, he was not rash, like his gallant prototype; did not vaunt himself or talk foolishly. It may not be saying much, but it is safe to affirm that, if he were not the most conspicuous member on his side, he was certainly the ablest. His critics thought he had an impediment of speech which they tried to imitate with types; but his utterance was always sufficient for his needs, as his opponents were not long in finding out. The infirmity, never serious, was soon mastered. So well satisfied with his work were his townsmen that they kept him in the house till wanted for a higher service. In 1820 and 1821, he was chairman of the finance committee, and in 1824, speaker. In April, 1825, he was elected a representative in Congress, which election vacated his seat in the state legislature to which he had been again chosen.

The presidential election in the fall of 1824 was, in Connecticut, a very quiet one. The federalists, after repeated defeats, had become discouraged, contenting themselves with efforts to divide their opponents. They fell upon their leaders, denounced the caucus and its candidates, and voted for any of them who would consent to run on an independent ticket. Of the four presidential candidates, Adams, Jackson, Crawford and Clay, all republicans, many of them preferred Jackson, while the democrats very generally favored Adams. A few, including Mr. Ingersoll, were friendly to Crawford. Adams, it will be remembered, was chosen president, not by the people, but by the house of represen-

tatives. At the state election, in April, 1825, the administration-congressional ticket met with little opposition. In Washington, Mr. Ingersoll (who had more votes than any other of the new members) of course supported Adams. But in 1828, the New England candidate (Adams), running for a second term, then as before, supported by the New Haven *Register*, and having more than two-thirds of the votes of Connecticut, was signally defeated by General Jackson. The New Haven *Herald* (federalist), the Hartford *Times* (democratic), and many of both parties sustained the latter. As the policy of the new President, set forth by his detractors as the "hero of two wars, nine duels and fifty cock-fights," became developed, the republicans of this State more and more gave him their confidence, while the other side withheld theirs. The election in the spring of 1831 gives evidence that the voters in considerable numbers were changing sides. For Congress there were two tickets, the national republican, supported by those who sympathized with Clay, the leader of the opposition to Jackson, and the so-called regular republican, upheld by the friends of the administration. The former was elected by nearly a two-thirds vote. The Connecticut *Journal* objected to Mr. Ingersoll (who was on both tickets) on the ground that he had not exerted himself to obtain an appropriation for the Farmington Canal (!), and was not sufficiently active in his friendship for Henry Clay.

Mr. Ingersoll (mayor of New Haven, in 1830-31), was in Congress from 1825 to 1833. At an early period he took a high rank among its members. For three years he served on the committee of the District of Columbia, but in 1829 was placed on that of ways and means, the most important committee of the house. Here he remained four years, holding during his last term the second place. Among his distinguished associates were McDuffie, of S. C., Verplanck, of N. Y., Gilmore, of Penn., and at the close, Polk, of Tenn. While yet a new mem-

ber, he spoke rarely, but at a later period, not infrequently, always with energy and effect. Able, incorruptible, industrious and vigilant, he appears to have given his time to the public business as he would have done to his own. Very clearly, he was not afraid of responsibility, and when the yeas and nays were called was nearly always in his place. On test questions, during the last four years, he voted with the other members from Connecticut—Barber, Young, Ellsworth, Huntington and Storrs—on the side of the opposition. In doing so, he represented the largest wing of the democratic party at home.

That President Jackson was a dangerous man, many of the great and good of all the old parties long believed—a man of destructive proclivities, self-willed, impatient of restraint, holding law and precedent in contempt. In short, he was viewed as a military man with military ideas and habits, and accustomed to summary processes. As President, he seemed to the conservatives not unlike a wild bull in a china shop, tossing about the state crockery. That he was a determined partisan, downright, sometimes passionate, rough on cherished abuses and steadfast in his antipathies, is undeniable. His veto of the Maysville road bill, his opposition to the prevalent system of internal improvements, his bitter hostility to the United States Bank and a protection tariff—all to a large extent the work of that master-spirit, Henry Clay—appeared to the doubters, vindictive, unreasonable and sometimes personal. Under these circumstances it is not strange that Mr. Ingersoll, constitutionally thoughtful and considerate, hesitated. But time proved that General Jackson was for the most part right—right in his ends if not in his means and motives. His sagacity was greater than many supposed, or else he was the most successful blunderer of his time. The democrats of Connecticut were a little tardy in perceiving the tendency of rival measures, and till developments, aided by much “sober second thought,” made it certain, did not recognize the President

as the legitimate successor of Jefferson and Madison. The course of the bank, and its attempt to wring from the government a new charter, using corrupt appliances and fostering a money-panic, helped to clear their vision. But, though delayed by misgivings and reverses, the revolution of opinion went on till an active minority became a majority of the party and the State. When convinced that General Jackson was a wiser and better man than he seemed—a patriot struggling for the right—Mr. Ingersoll, as in duty bound, recognized the “new departure,” took part in the movement, and contributed largely to its success.

In the spring of 1833, after Mr. Ingersoll returned from Washington, the democratic party united in voting for Henry W. Edwards for governor. They failed to elect him, but secured both branches of the legislature, and thus obtained their man. Though national republicans (afterward “whigs”) were in every instance sent to Congress, the friends of the President were jubilant. They had long contended with adversity and defeat, and now hoped the tide was turning. But before the revolution was completed, and the party re-united and consolidated, a disaster overtook it. Secretary Taney, by order of the President, and in contempt of a resolution of the house of representatives, notified the Bank of the United States that the government funds, after the first of October, 1833, would no more be placed in its custody. The excitement was intense and a money-panic followed. Business was paralyzed, factories were closed, and working men in large numbers thrown out of employment. In the midst of the storm, when tribulation and stinted larders had cowed the masses, the state election of April, 1834, came on. Edwards had been re-nominated, while on the same side Mr. Ingersoll was a candidate for town representative. In vain was it urged that national politics had nothing to do with the state election. The voters, numerous beyond precedent, did not think so; they

wanted work and wages, and both were defeated, the first by Samuel A. Foot, the last by Isaac H. Townsend. In other words, the "whigs" were triumphant; the "tories," soon to become "loco focos," prostrate. But adversity cured dissension; flagellation promoted harmony; and in another year the vanquished were again the victors.

On going to Congress, as was customary at that time, Mr. Ingersoll gave up wholly the practice of law. Returning, he found his business was broken up: his former clients had sought other advisers, and at the age of forty-four, he was obliged to begin, as it were, anew. It was then that he regretted having accepted a position which took him from his much loved profession. But the industry and talent which had once achieved the victory soon enabled him to wear off the eight years' rust, and to regain all he had lost. But before success had been fully attained, the great fire in New York, in 1836, swept off much of the property which, untouched by himself, had been reserved for the use of his family. The loss of course did not dishearten him, but made necessary redoubled effort. In 1833 he became state attorney, which office he filled with his usual fidelity and ability about twelve years. After the death of Nathan Smith, a senator of the United States, in December, 1835, Governor Edwards selected him to fill the vacancy—a position to which the legislature, which met in May following, would undoubtedly have elected him—but he peremptorily declined. Often when his party was in power was he requested to take the nomination for governor; and it is undoubtedly true that for a long time he could have had any office in the State which his political friends controlled. In only one instance did he depart from his purpose not to accept honors which interfered with his profession, and that was in 1846, when President Polk appointed him minister plenipotentiary to the Russian court. The two had served together in Congress eight years, (one on the committee of ways

and means,) and though at that time politically divided, had been intimate and trusted friends. The President knew the sterling qualities of his old associate, and without notice or intimation, took the first opportunity to call them into public use. It is strictly true, as those who knew the man will readily believe, that the compliment was unsought and unexpected.* After an absence of two years, having served his government faithfully and ably, he gladly returned to his profession, and with unabated vigor practiced it twenty years, never with more distinguished success.

Through life Mr. Ingersoll retained his interest in political affairs. Faithful to his early convictions, no man did more to sustain the character of his party in this State; to restrain its excesses and direct it to worthy, patriotic ends. A sagacious

* Since writing the text, the letter of President Polk to Mr. Ingersoll tendering this office has been shown to the writer. By his request, it is published here:

WASHINGTON CITY, *August 9th, 1846.*

MY DEAR SIR:

You will no doubt be surprised to learn that you have, without your solicitation or knowledge, been nominated to the Senate of the United States and confirmed by that body as Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary to Russia. You are selected for this important mission, from my personal knowledge of you, and without the suggestion of any one. When I went to the capitol on last evening for the convenience of congress, and especially of its committee on engrossed bills, as is usual on the last nights of a session, I informed the two Senators from your State of my intention. It was the first they knew of it. It is proper to explain to you how it happened that I did not consult you in advance. Some months ago I had intimated, indeed said, that I would appoint another person at the close of the session of congress—and it was not until yesterday that I learned that the person alluded to had made up his mind to decline it. I had of course but a few hours left within which to make another selection. In this instance, at least, the office has sought the man and not the man the office,—and allow me to say, that it is to be regretted that this is not more frequently the case, and especially in regard to the higher positions under the government. I hope you may accept the highly honorable and responsible station now tendered to you. In that event I have no doubt you will do great service to the country and do honor to the station as well as to yourself.

I find myself much exhausted by the intense labor I have performed and the close confinement I have suffered during the long session of congress now about to close.

I am, with great respect,

Your friend and obedient servant,

JAMES K. POLK.

HON. RALPH I. INGERSOLL,
New Haven,
Connecticut.

leader, wise and safe, he kept himself thoroughly informed of its condition and needs. Its meetings for consultation, he usually attended, gave encouragement and advice without being obtrusive, prepared resolutions and spoke and wrote as occasion required. To his neighbors and friends, he sometimes made a set speech, but would not go "stumping" round the country; nor would he charge himself with the details of party-work. Though long in political life and often tempted, his native dignity, his innate manhood, preserved him from contamination—from the vices of those unclean spirits which are the scourges of every political organization. Disreputable practices he discouraged as unprofitable and demoralizing. Though he did not escape detraction and even abuse, so few were his vulnerable points, and so strong was he in character and the hearts of the people, that his opponents found profit in forbearance and discretion.

Mr. Ingersoll loved his profession, and with unfaltering resolution through a long life, devoted himself to it. Believing it a noble calling having the first claim on his time and talents, he denied himself the pleasures and diversions in which others indulged. For him there was no "vacation." The few years he spent in other but allied pursuits were grudged as comparatively unprofitable. With enthusiasm enough to give tension to the faculties, and make labor easy and productive, he fixed his mind irrevocably on the end. He desired to attain excellence and eminence as a lawyer, and on that objective point were brought to bear the convergent forces of his whole nature. Having noble endowments—an intellect vigorous, methodical and well balanced, obedient to the will, and equipped with every needful adornment—toiling on year after year as if in the belief that genius, so called, confers nothing but the power to work effectively—he could not miss the prize. Of necessity, he was a hard student, but not of books alone. Books supply facts and suggest thoughts

to the thoughtful, but of themselves never yet made a man great. Familiar with the teachings of others, he studied human nature profoundly, dissected character, and became acquainted with mind in all its variety, and thus gained the knowledge and skill which so distinguished him.

Mr. Ingersoll, unlike those eccentric men who gain undeserved reputation by the unequal prominence of a particular faculty or quality of mind, was noted for the proportionate and harmonious development of all the powers—powers which would have secured distinction in any walk of intellectual life. In him, there was no oddity of manner, no mental squinting, no strange or inverted way of thinking to attract attention. Sorry conceits and juggling devices to cheat the senses and capture the intellect formed no part of his capital in trade. An able and skillful lawyer, a vigorous thinker, adequately learned and familiar with the whole field of practice, he was content to earn his laurels fairly. His voice, pleasant almost musical and of unusual compass, could be heard distinctly in its lowest tones. The ready, fluent speech, graceful delivery, active but natural and easy gesticulation; the energetic, earnest manner, and the countenance which mirrored every thought; all contributed to his power as an advocate. While his language was select and scholarly, his argument was clear, logical, compact and complete. Eminently persuasive, forgetting nothing and digressing rarely, he touched lightly on the weaker points of his case, and knew where to place the strain. If the chain broke the fault was not his.

Though Mr. Ingersoll could speak well with little premeditation, he was accustomed to prepare his cases thoroughly. He made them his own and gave his clients his sympathy, but looked at both sides, weighed opposing considerations, and tendered the best advice. Well fortified himself, he was quick to see and expose an unguarded point in the enemy, dex-

trously driving home his advantage. Though when speaking to the court or a deliberative body, he addressed himself wholly to the intellect, using little ornament; when standing before a jury or popular assembly, he gave himself more liberty; was sometimes impetuous, often eloquent. On these occasions he would show his power over the common mind, putting himself in contact with those primitive sentiments, convictions and instincts which lie at the foundation of human nature, and which are older than reason. With his hand on these hidden springs of action, he shaped and directed the cerebral movements, awakened emotion, or quickened the sense of right, carrying his auditors whither he would. Says one of large experience: "He was the best public speaker I ever knew." In a notable degree he possessed that personal magnetism by the aid of which the orator sways and sets on fire the sympathetic multitude. At one time he was humorous and witty, at another, serious and pathetic, and could be sarcastic. Oppression of the weak by the strong he would vehemently denounce; a prevaricating witness flay, if he could.

Unlike most lawyers, Mr. I. was an experienced and accomplished writer. Few of any profession wrote with equal ability or in better taste. At an early period he began to think on paper, and through life kept up the practice, supposing doubtless that it favored the accurate and logical working of the intellect. That he might keep up with the flow of thought, he wrote rapidly, but corrected with great care. If a sentence or word did not suit him; if it were capable of a meaning different from the one intended; if it did not express with sufficient fullness or precision his finished thought; it was discarded and another sought. Even the punctuation seemed to him important, and he sometimes wrestled long over the question of comma or semi-colon. Concerning his facts he was conscientiously scrupulous, and would state nothing which was not wholly and exactly true. Though

often writing under provocation and on exciting political questions, he was thoughtful of character, and never offensively personal. Said he to an impulsive young editor: "Never speak or write ill of a political opponent." His compositions, like his published speeches and addresses, were perspicuous and packed with thought. They were not long and never dreary. Among his intimate friends he was known as a beautiful letter-writer.

Perhaps no man ever lived a purer, more exemplary life than Ralph I. Ingersoll. His character, noted for its symmetry, was adorned by all the public and private virtues. Honorable, manly and just, it is believed he was never guilty of an act of meanness or conscious wrong. Governed himself by a delicate sense of duty and honor, he marveled at the loose morality and mercenary instincts often exhibited by our public men; marveled at the sudden growth and fearful proportions of the *lobby*. Though tolerant and charitable, he had little patience with the organized wickedness of the day; little with those faithless incumbents of office who plunder the treasury and exchange their votes for money—or its equivalent. "When I was in Congress," he used to say, "the like things were unknown," or were too rare to have importance. An honest man and a patriot, the corruption and depravity everywhere visible distressed and alarmed him. He loved the government our fathers founded, and now in the day of its trial trembled for its safety.

Accustomed to forecast events and weigh probabilities, Mr. Ingersoll was in the best sense a prudent man. Very properly he was reluctant to take a risk; would not give an opinion or advocate a measure unless there were solid grounds for it; would not put to hazard a good reputation, or butt his head against a wall, because pressed to do so. Not in the least fanatical, and opposed to radicalism and violence, he would go no further and no faster than seemed to him wise. In all things he was practicable and practical, well knowing the hidden force which a

"masterly inactivity" may develop. Others were more adventurous, more aggressive, and sometimes without deserving it got more reputation. On account of his habitual caution, some impatient people thought he lacked courage, but he was not afraid to do his duty. When the way was clear and the right apparent, he was ready to go forward, and if the case were urgent was fleet as the fleetest. Surely cowardice, physical or moral, had no place in his breast, as many incidents of his life strikingly exemplify.

Mr. Ingersoll was delicately organized, slender, straight, and had a healthy constitution. His height may have been five feet nine; his weight, one hundred and thirty pounds. For his size his head was large, full in the frontal region and prominent at the angles. In later life he wore a black stock and shaved closely; had finely cut features, thin lips and dark eyes well protected by jutting brows. At times there was a nervous twitching (characteristic of three generations) about the eye and side of the face. Several years before his death he received an injury of the hip, and thenceforth walked with a halting step supported by a cane. Till nearly eighty, with unclouded intellect, he continued his practice, and till the last went daily to his office when health permitted. There he would sit in his familiar arm-chair reading or writing, and giving a cordial welcome to any friend who might call. His intimate acquaintance with political life and character, and the written history of his time, taken in connection with his urbanity, kindness, candor and simple dignity, made his conversation extremely interesting and instructive. His opponents, in their helplessness, sometimes called him aristocratic; but he was the reverse of that in dress, manners and mode of life, and apparently in thought and feeling. Consistently, he was in sympathy with all honest men, and the furthest possible from ostentation and pretension, affectation and cant. Economical without parsimony, a slave to

no appetite, neat in person and attire, refined in his tastes; genial, large-hearted, a fast friend and thorough gentleman; he was a model of republican simplicity. Domestic in his habits, he loved his home and scarcely ever left it. With slow step across the green and about our city, he moved as noiselessly and unassumingly as any man among us. Six months before his decease a fracture of the arm, the result of a fall on the City Bank steps, confined him to his house. He did not recover. Without a known enemy, beloved and mourned by all, he died August 26th, 1872. In his last years he was a communicant of Trinity church. His widow, of Dutch parentage, whose maiden name was Margaret Van den Heuvel, of New York, a lady of great energy and discretion, and who was indeed a help-meet, still survives. They were married February 10th, 1814.

